Minutes of the
Council on Technology Services
Tuesday, September 29, 1998

Council Attendees:

Cheryl Clark, Ray Davis, Jan Fatouros, Patti Higgins, Patricia Jackson (for Erv Blythe), Pete Kolakowski, Bill Landsidle, Polly Ann McClure, Ken Mittendorff, David Molchany, Ed Morris, Mike O'Neil, Lan Neugent, Rick Parks, Gerry Pacyna, Jim Peters, Keith Segerson (for Joy Hughes), Jerry Simonoff, David Sullivan, Mike Thomas, Paul Timmreck, Secretary Don Upson, Lewis Vass, Andy Poarch, Jamie Breeden.

Secretary Upson convened the meeting of the Council on Technology Services at 9:08 a.m. in the Auditorium of the Pocahontas Building.

Secretary Upson announced that on September 22, Governor Gilmore launched the external policy side of the administration's technology agenda - the Governor's Commission on Information Technology. COTS and the Commission represent the internal and external initiatives for establishing a technology policy agenda for the Commonwealth. The Commission consists of six key members of the Legislature who have either or both jurisdictional or representational responsibility for technology issues and businesses. The Secretary of Technology chairs the Commission, and a private sector representative serves as the Vice-Chair. The Commission's mission is to work toward integrating the state's technology centers to allow different regions to communicate with one another and to recognize all parties are working from a common agenda in developing information technology.

On September 28, Governor Gilmore transferred the Center for Innovative Technology to the Secretariat of Technology. It represents the final step in consolidating a departmental vision the Governor expects to take to the Legislature in January. CIT's mission complements many of the COTS issues. For example, the RFP for telecommunications recognizes the need for infrastructure investments throughout the Commonwealth. COTS will work with the CIT on a broader telecommunications blueprint that will look at the current infrastructure in Virginia, the infrastructure needed, the applications required to drive the investment and a representation of telecommunica-tions access required for all of Virginia.

The Department of Innovative Technology, a division of the Department of Environmental Quality, has also been transferred to the Secretary of Technology. Dr. K.C. Das is the Director and administers a small business innovative research program whose objective is the creation of a statewide research and development policy. The program is primarily for small, high-tech firms working with Virginia's universities to commercialize ideas and encourage the investment of Federal R&D money. It is a $1.2 billion annual program, of which Virginia ranks third in receiving money.

At the previous COTS meeting, Joy Hughes raised the desktop leasing issue and the impediments the university system experiences. Other universities have shared similar concerns and Secretary Upson addressed the subject when he spoke at the recent JCOTS meeting. COTS can play an instrumental role as a vehicle that moves the state toward desktop leasing, where appropriate.

Rick Pugh, Director of the Office of Compensation and Policy for the Department of Personnel and Training conducted a presentation on IT Compensation/Classification Policy. Bob Weaver and Greg Noland worked on the study specifics. Throughout the Southeast, the main topic of interest is information technology jobs. All states are facing problems of how to recruit, retain and compete to ensure the best technical expertise is acquired to address Y2K issues. DPT asked for suggestions and feedback from Council members.

Mike Thomas mentioned that VCU is participating in a pilot for this type of study. Paul Timmreck said VCU received authority to move forward with a number of modifications to its compensation and classification of IT employees. It requires restructuring and modifying each agency's internal budget. VCU hopes to see the pilot adopted as a permanent program in the future.

Secretary Upson applauded DPT and the Secretary of Administration for recognizing and addressing the problem. This is an excellent opportunity for COTS to work with DPT on an issue that will stand as a best practice. Secretary Upson recommended establishing a workgroup of COTS members to work with DPT and asked all interested members to notify him.

Mike Thomas discussed the Telecommunications RFP for long distance voice and data services. DIT is trying to provide quality services for agencies and build in flexibility for the future by offering emerging technologies. A key point of the RFP is requesting vendors to provide a solution for current systems and for future direction. DIT needs the creativity and knowledge of new technologies that members of this Council possess. DIT is involving a number of agencies in the evaluation and selection process in order to take advantage of various levels of expertise. Mike introduced Charlie Hudgins, Director of the Telecommunications Division at DIT.

Charlie discussed RFP 98-20; it can be found online at asd.state.va.usbids/rfp98020. htm. It is a telecommunications network service agreement RFP for the Commonwealth. It replaces the existing Custom Network Service Agreement that is in place. The purpose of the RFP is to establish a firm, fixed-price contract with costs that will not vary with tariffs or with other policies or procedures from a particular vendor. This contract should facilitate an agency's development of its telecommunications budget in year one of the contract and then use that same formula in year five of the contract for budget development.

DIT intends to make this contract available to all state agencies, institutions, institutions of higher education, localities, political subdivisions, and school divisions and any other government agencies as described in the *Code of Virginia*. The term of the contract is an initial two-year period with three, one-

year renewals - for a total of five potential years. The RFP was issued on August 27, 1998 and vendor proposals are due to DIT on January 7, 1999. This date ensures the vendors have four months to read the RFP and to have the opportunity for them to develop partnerships. DIT does not believe there is one single vendor that can provide everything that is requested in the RFP. The intended contract award date is June 30, 1999 or sooner if at all possible.

Mike Thomas discussed that DIT and Virginia Tech have signed an MOU for the administration of Net. Work.Virginia, and details will be forthcoming.

Secretary Upson briefly discussed VIPNet as an initiative for Web-enabled government. It is an interactive network linking Virginia's citizens to agencies of state and local government.

Mike Thomas explained that one area of the Council's responsibility is to provide a state agency/ executive branch perspective for use in planning for the Virginia Information Providers Network (VIPNet). It is clear that business interaction between private businesses, between government and citizens, and between state and Federal government is moving to the World Wide Web. In order to provide quality services to Virginia's citizens, the Commonwealth must take advantage of the Web and the Internet to provide requested services. It is incumbent upon Virginia to take advantage of emerging technologies and provide a wider range of services to the citizens.

VIPNet was created by a proposal of the Governor in 1996 with the approval of the General Assembly. It is a state authority and is intended to be a catalyst for helping state agencies make information available to the citizens. Dan Houlihan is the Network Manager who was hired last year by the Authority's Board of Directors. He is a former state CIO having served as CIO for state government in Indiana.

Dan Houlihan discussed the common information technology challenges facing state government today. This is the framework in which the idea for VIPNet was conceived. VIPNet was designed to address issues such as simplifying access to government, balancing services that citizens need, and helping fund the costs. It is a public/private partnership. The governing board consists of eleven members, five are from the private sector and six members are from the public sector. They provide direction and guidance on areas needing focus. A network manager was hired to be the private partner in the partnership. The vision for VIPNet is how to become the facilitator of virtual government for the Commonwealth. How can VIPNet take paper-based processes that exist today and work with agencies to make them available on the Web? VIPNet's focus is in three areas – increasing information and electronic information access, building interactive government applications and electronic commerce.

Dan distributed a survey asking where each agency is headed with its Internet plans and the challenges it will face in implementing those plans. Please return the survey to Andy Poarch at DIT.

Secretary Upson announced the next COTS meeting will be held October 27 at Highway 1 in Washington, D.C. More information will be forthcoming.

Secretary Upson discussed establishing Council workgroups to address significant issues such as IT compensation and desktop leasing. Secretary Upson will send an email to members soliciting their comments and concerns on various areas of interest.

David Sullivan would like to address the single pipeline idea – single networks running to localities. He would like to see this as a potential workgroup that moves toward building a state network that all localities can interact with and share the bandwidth and costs and not duplicate connections to every locality.

David Molchany suggested systems that both state government and localities can use. Rather than have the state dictate systems, have local governments involved in the development of systems that will replace local systems with state. There is also a need for applications development and how it intersects with the Federal government.

Keith Segerson acquired information about the ETF (equipment trust fund) process that has clear restrictions for all agencies. The most significant is the requirement to maintain that equipment for five years in good working order. As the Council explores leasing versus purchasing, it needs to look at funding sources and what can be done with that money. Secretary Upson said Pete Kolakowski agreed to chair this workgroup.

Ken Mittendorff discussed a paper that CIM issued a number of years ago – minimum standards for workstations or equipment. There should be a minimum standard when purchasing personal computers. If something is purchased below the standard, then there needs to be a mechanism that gets the funding to replace it. He raised issues of how to get funding to replace old equipment or to lease.

Mike O'Neil asked if the Council could establish a series of newsgroups to be able to observe the various interactions that take place among COTS members.

Secretary Upson introduced Becky Barnett from the Department of General Services and asked to give an update of negotiations on the software contracts. The current state contracts are due to expire at the close of business on September 30. If agencies have immediate needs, please take advantage of the deadline. Replacement contracts will be awarded from now until January, 1999.

The COTS Meeting was adjourned at 12:03 p.m.